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ABSTRACT

The manual outlines the processes, policies, and actual program implementation of one component of a Minnesota program for emotionally disturbed adolescents (Project SAIL): the development of school-based therapy/intervention groups. The characteristics of SAIL students are described, and some considerations involved in providing group services within a public school setting are presented. The underlying beliefs and values of the SAIL groups are discussed, along with their composition, structure, and leadership. The five stages of group development (trust building, cohesiveness, power, intimacy, and termination) are outlined, and specific examples of characteristic behavior at each stage are presented along with strategies and activities that have been used by staff to facilitate the various stages. Some negative group situations and outcomes are also described. (DLS)

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SCHOOL–BASED ADOLESCENT GROUPS: THE SAIL MODEL

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This manual describes one portion of the SAIL program; the development of school-based adolescent groups. There are other written materials and video tapes available which describe additional components of the SAIL program. These include:

1) Brochure: contains brief description of SAIL program

2) Visitor's Packet: contains written materials with general overview of SAIL program

3) SAIL Slide-tape: 20 minute general overview of SAIL program

4) "Use of Goal Attainment Scaling with Emotionally Disturbed, Drop-out Prone Adolescents," Goal Attainment Review, 1978 anniversary issue.

   This article provides a detailed description of the use of Goal Attainment Scaling as the I.E.P., primary focus of treatment, and tool for program evaluation in project SAIL.

5) Goal Attainment Scaling: A Primary Method of Treatment and Program Evaluation in Project SAIL – A Special Education Dropout Prevention Program. This 55 page manual provides specific explanation of the goal setting process, scoring procedure, two case histories complete with their goal attainment guide, and numerous examples of goals selected by SAIL students. Cost of manual: $2.00.

6) Video-tape of the stages of group development. The 45 minute video tape is intended to accompany this group manual as part of a presentation on group work by SAIL staff.

Site visits to Project SAIL can be arranged by contacting: Mary J. Balfour, SAIL Co-ordinator, Project Sail, Lindbergh High School, 2400 Lindbergh Drive, Minnetonka, Minnesota 55343; 546-2451, Ext. 29.

Workshops conducted by SAIL staff on Goal Attainment Scaling, adolescent groups, collaboration between special educators and mainstream faculty, and characteristics of dropout prone troubled adolescents are also available upon request.

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DESCRIPTION OF SAIL PROJECT

This program is an ESEA Title IV-C Special Education project, begun in the fall of 1976 at Lindbergh. The staff consists of three social workers, three special educators, and a secretary. There were 67 students serviced for varying lengths of time in 1976-77 and 127 students in SAIL in 1977-78. Three types of students qualify for participation: 1) students who have previously dropped out and wish to return to school, 2) students seriously contemplating dropping out, and 3) in-school dropouts (excessive skips, absences, failures, and incompletes). Most of these students also experience problems in one or more of the following areas: legal infractions, chemical and alcohol abuse or dependency, physical abuse, sexual abuse, serious family disturbances, authority conflicts, dysfunctional peer relationships, or psychological problems. Contrary to the staff's previous expectations, under carefully controlled testing conditions, it was found that learning disabilities did not seem to be a primary factor.

All students in SAIL participate in the regular high school curricula and are heterogeneously grouped in academic classes. In addition, SAIL students participate in intensive group sessions with SAIL staff, three days a week for one and one-half hours per day. Each student also meets with a SAIL staff person for an individual session weekly. A goal setting process that encourages individuals to set concrete, measurable goals which are realistically attainable is used as a major component of the SAIL project. Parents of SAIL students are contacted bi-weekly and are given factual and complete information on how the student functions. SAIL staff also meet with each student's classroom teachers weekly for reciprocal sharing of information regarding the student's academic progress.

A major focus during the first year was a voluntary, in-service training program for teachers. Ten programs were presented including the following topics: chemical dependency, goal setting, behavior management, families in crises, adolescent sexuality, curriculum modification, and "games" kids play.

The SAIL staff also encourages students and their families to use appropriate community resources if needed, including chemical/alcoholism treatment programs, court services, state employment services, medical clinics and counseling agencies. SAIL staff serve as case managers and advocates for the family, facilitating the referral process and coordinating a comprehensive and consistent service plan.

The SAIL program has proven to be a successful method of intervention with this high risk population, and most importantly, it has shown that emotionally troubled, dropout prone youth can experience success in the regular academic setting without being segregated into a self-contained, mini-school environment.

During the first two years of SAIL 75% of SAIL students who were in the project two or more quarters achieved their individual goals which relate to academic achievement and social/emotional development, (Goal Attainment Scaling). Seventy-one percent of students who were in SAIL two or more quarters did not drop out of school. Of the students who did not drop out, 79% earned at least the minimum number of credits.

SAIL STAFF

MARY J. BALFOUR is the coordinator for the SAIL project. She completed a B.S. degree in Home Economics from the University of Minnesota, a M.A. degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Minnesota, and certification requirements for special education with emotionally disturbed. She has worked with high school students for the past twelve years, first as a Home Economics teacher, then in designing the Family Life Education Curriculum, and finally as a guidance counselor until assuming the special education leadership position with SAIL.

BARBARA J. BRAHAM is a psychiatric social worker who has worked with individuals and families in mental health settings and schools over the past four years. She received her B.A. degree in Psychology from the University of Kansas and her B.S.W. and M.S.W. degrees from the University of Kansas. In addition to her work in the SAIL project, Barbara has taught several courses at the University of Minnesota related to women in therapy.

LINDA HALL HARRIS has worked with pre-school, elementary, and high school students and their families for the past seven years. She received a B.S. degree in Special Education with Emotionally Disturbed and a M.A. degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Michigan. She also earned a M.S.W. from the University of Minnesota. Linda is currently chairperson of the Hopkins Public Schools Social Work Department. She has published on a wide variety of topics including sex-role stereotyping by mental health clinicians, management skills for direct service social workers, public school consultation, Goal Attainment Scaling, and program evaluation.

BEVERLY POST JOHNSON received her B.S. degree in Elementary Education from the University of Minnesota. In addition she completed her special education certification requirements from the University of Minnesota with a specialization in learning disabilities. She has had twelve years full and part time experience at the elementary and secondary levels and has spent the last eight of those years working in special education. She has conducted workshops on learning disabilities and curriculum modification with adolescents.

JAN ORMASA received a B.S. degree in Special Education with Emotionally Disturbed from Syracuse University and a M.A. degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Minnesota. Previous to SAIL, she has four years experience at an elementary school where she designed and coordinated the special education services. In addition, she has coordinated the development of the parent component of the SAIL program.

JOHN L. THOMPSON has been working with troubled adolescents at the junior and senior high school levels for the past eight years. He received a B.S. degree in English Education from the University of Minnesota, and an M.A. degree in Special Education with Emotionally Disturbed from the College of St. Thomas. He was formerly on the part time staff at St. Mary's Chemical Dependency Unit. John has conducted local, state, and national workshops and has published articles on dropout-prone students, Goal Attainment Scaling, chemical dependency, and program evaluation.

SAIL STUDENTS COMMENT ABOUT GROUP

Each Spring, SAIL students are asked to fill out an anonymous questionnaire evaluating the SAIL project. Here are some of their comments about group:

WHAT PARTS OF SAIL HAVE YOU FOUND MOST HELPFUL?

- Group. The pressure makes you feel important.
- The support that group members give you, and discussions about what you are going to do to improve.
- Support from group members, goals, and confrontation.
- Talking with other group members and knowing that you're not alone.
- Getting other kids' opinions in group.
- Bring up personal problems that I have and sharing them with the group. It was hard, but it helped me to see my problems better from a different view.

DESCRIBE YOUR MOST MEMORABLE GROUP.

- The time when I was going to drop out and the group talked me out of it.
- The group where we went back and thought about our favorite toy we had as a kid or the beating we got when we were little. That was rough, but I made the best of it.
- When B.'s grandfather died, and we spent the group talking about death.
- The time when I got out my anger about my parents, trying to realize what was behind it all. Also the time when the kitten was here, was really kind of fun.
- The one where there was a lot of extra time and we got to just talk and joke around. Everybody was in a good mood.
- The group when we reinforced our confidentiality rule.
- I had to be open and honest in group and interact with other people. It made me more direct with my peers and teachers and I was more outgoing. My attendance in class went up, my work got done.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

The SAIL program is composed of numerous interlocking components such as the use of Goal Attainment Scaling, collaboration with mainstream faculty, communication with parents, student groups, and individual sessions with students. Each of these were briefly described in the preceeding description on page 1. This manual, however, focuses on one aspect of SAIL: the development of school-based adolescent groups for effective intervention with troubled adolescents. It is important for the reader to remember that groups constitute only a portion of the entire SAIL model. Group with dropout-prone or behavior problem adolescents is a widely-used method of intervention, however, there is little written information available on the practical aspects of running these groups in school settings. Theoretical texts are useful, yet they do not address themselves to many of the major day-to-day issues faced by school professionals.

This manual focuses on such practical considerations as:

- How do group leaders facilitate the development of trust between the students themselves or between the leaders and the group?
- What are the stages in group development?
- How can groups be scheduled in the school day? How long should they meet? How frequently?
- How are students selected for group? (Size? Composition? Entry process?)
- What kind of group leadership works best?
- And finally, the ultimate question, what actually goes on in a group?

The manual reflects the SAIL staff's own experiences in developing a group model of intervention for emotionally troubled adolescents. It describes the basic assumptions,

structure, stages of group development, techniques, and activities developed by the staff as they worked together in teams over the past two years. The content is also based on ideas gathered from numerous site visits of facilities for adolescents and interviews with other mental health professionals in the metropolitan area who conduct adolescent groups.

It is hoped that this group manual will be useful to other school professionals as they create services for troubled adolescents. However, the SAIL group model has been specifically designed to correspond to the interplay of the skills and needs of the individual students, faculty, administration, and specific community as well as the SAIL staff itself at Lindbergh High School in Hopkins. Consequently, any school deciding to implement a group program similar to SAIL will need to further adapt the model so that it successfully intermeshes with that particular school's needs and existing services.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SAIL STUDENTS

Students are referred to SAIL by teachers, administrators, and parents through the regular special education child study process. Referrals are based on three specific criteria:

1) The student is a former dropout who wishes to re-enter school.

2) The student is strongly considering dropping out of school soon.

3) The student is functioning as an "in-school dropout." That is, the student is failing to earn a minimum amount of academic credits due to excessive absences or chronic failure to complete assignments.

After the Child Study Assessment has been completed and students have been recommended to receive special education service, the student and family have an opportunity to discuss the placement recommendation, and the reasons for the referral with school representatives. Technically, placement is voluntary, yet many students enter SAIL expressing resistance; many families elect SAIL only because they feel that it is the last hope and are frequently skeptical.

Though initially referred to SAIL because of excessive skipping, failures, or intentions of dropping out, all students also evidenced serious emotional problems and inadequate coping skills for dealing with many aspects of their lives in addition to school functioning. Students in SAIL represent the full range of intellectual capabilities. Although the preliminary evidence suggests that learning disabilities was not a primary handicapping condition, all SAIL students were academically performing significantly below their potential at the time of referral.

Data from the first two years of SAIL show that students have also experienced handicapping conditions in one or more of the following areas which significantly impede the learning process:

chemical/alcohol abuse
sexual and/or physical abuse
legal problems
suicide gestures
chronic authority conflicts
serious family pathology
significant psychological problems
unresolved traumatic life events

ADVANTAGES OF A GROUP MODEL

In designing an innovative special education service delivery system for dropout-prone students, staff decided a group model would be most appropriate as a major component of the SAIL program. The staff believed a group model could provide a microcosmic environment within which peers could feed reality back to one another in a caring manner. In group, students could safely explore alternative styles of interaction and group leaders could model more appropriate ways of relating. Unlike other group work models, however, the staff has found that students need individual time with staff in addition to participating in group. Consequently each student is scheduled to attend group three times per week and an individual session with his/her case manager once per week.

The core methodology of Project SAIL is Goal Attainment Scaling. This goal setting process is used in SAIL as the student's Individual Educational Plan (I.E.P.), the focus of treatment, communicating about the student's progress to parents, and as a method for evaluating total program outcomes. Goal Attainment Scaling is a goal setting process that encourages individuals to set concrete, measurable goals which are realistically attainable. Staff assists students to select 6–15 individualized goals with at least one goal related to attendance and academic achievement in each class. Additional goals mutually negotiated by the student and staff relate to problem areas such as aggression, dependency, chemical abuse, hostility, passivity, suicide, responsibility, sexuality, peer relationships, authority conflicts, delinquency, etc. Students are also expected to select at least one goal focused on maintenance of a currently successful area of functioning or personal strength.

Students score these goals each Friday in group, and discussion focuses on mutual recognition for goal attainment. This provides a vehicle for immediate and continuous feedback for the student regarding ongoing progress. At the end of each nine week quarter, an overall goal attainment score is calculated for each student. Students can receive elective credit for participation in SAIL; however, this credit is contingent upon successful attainment of at least half of the goals. Because SAIL focuses on the importance of accountability through the use of Goal Attainment Scaling, it was felt that groups would further enhance the individual's motivation to achieve his/her goals by providing a milieu of reality testing and support.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

The entire SAIL model is based on a systems interpretation of behavior as well as a total systems approach to intervention and treatment. In this context, a "systems approach" means focusing not just on the individual student in isolation, but on student's total interactions with significant people and institutions. The SAIL staff works closely with all parts of the student's world: faculty, parents, community agencies and peers. This type of a broadbased communication and support network reduces the possibility that a student will "slip through the cracks" and enhances the probabilities that a particular student will internalize and generalize newly acquired coping skills. It is the acquisition of these coping skills which will enable the student to achieve academic success in the mainstream.

In order to provide a framework for understanding the group approach described in this manual, it first seems important to make explicit certain basic assumptions held by the SAIL staff with regard to the various components of the system. The beliefs and values SAIL staff hold with regard to their own functioning as a team affect the nature of the total SAIL project. These assumptions will be outlined first. The next section describes the staff's belief system regarding collaboration with faculty. Following that section is an overview of the staff's philosophy about working with troubled adolescents, and finally a brief section on parent involvement.

Basic Assumptions About SAIL Team Functioning

The SAIL staff has chosen to use a consensus model of decision making, and believes that the process by which an outcome is achieved is often as significant as the outcome itself. The staff is committed to shared leadership with each member assuming coordination for different components of the SAIL program. Providing time for mutual staff support is a high priority.

Contrary to the title of the project (**SAIL**—**S**tudent **A**dvocates **I**nspire **L**earning), the staff does not assume an "advocate" stance in working with students, which presumes the existence of allies and enemies. Rather, the SAIL staff perceives its role as <u>mediator</u> between the links of the student's system (parents, peers, teachers, community agencies) in order to facilitate reality testing and strengthen the network for each member of the system. The following example may help clarify this distinction. A student and his/her family is arguing over curfew. An <u>advocate</u> might focus on helping the student determine a reasonable curfew and assist the student in "winning" the argument. A <u>mediator</u>, however, would tend to focus more on the total problem solving process, helping each member of the dispute clarify his/her own needs and assist the group to achieve problem resolution. This type of comprehensive system's approach has seemed to be the most viable in a school setting for affecting significant change.

Basic Assumptions About Collaborating With Mainstream Faculty

The SAIL staff and faculty work collaboratively as a team and perceive themselves as having shared responsibilities for SAIL students. SAIL staff meets weekly with each

faculty member to discuss the student's current functioning and to verify student's self-reporting on goals regarding their attendance and achievement for the week.

In talking with SAIL staff, many faculty express feelings of guilt and a sense of personal inadequacy when students fail in their classes. SAIL staff attempts to offer the faculty perspective on the student's over-all behavior and insights into issues the student is currently struggling with, in order to assist faculty in feeling more competent working with the student. Staff support faculty in setting limits in their classrooms and in designing appropriate consequences.

SAIL staff does not assume that a student is failing because of the faculty. It is not the teacher's or the school's fault. Students in SAIL are having problems in many areas of their lives in addition to school. . .on the job, with peers, in the community, and with parents. Curriculum modification and job placement probably help a student earn a diploma, however, neither technique approaches the core issues with which these students struggle. A high school diploma in and of itself does not ease the pain and distorted sense of reality of an incest victim or a person suffering from chemical dependency. The overall problems the student experiences do not disappear until the student deals with his/her own interpretation of reality and develops improved coping strategies. This in turn affects the student's overall school performance.

Basic Assumptions About Working With Troubled Students

SAIL staff believes the personal growth and change are possible for each student and that schools can play a major role in facilitating that process. Staff genuinely accepts students "where they are" when they initially enter SAIL without excusing or condemning their previous behavior. Although it is important to help students reflect upon childhood events in order to make sense of their own personal history, the staff's primary focus is to facilitate student's accepting responsibility for their present behavior. Staff helps students focus on the reality issues of day to day functioning, and assists the students in developing more effective coping skills and strategies in responding to events in their lives. Staff helps students to envision a wider range of alternatives for themselves and to develop an increased sense of control over their own destiny. In guiding this process, staff most frequently uses a directive approach as posited by explicit sharing of values, raising issues, exploring alternative solutions, and when necessary, directly confronting inappropriate behavior.

Students are expected to select goals regarding behavioral changes they wish to make. These goals always relate to improved school functioning. Frequently, however, students select very personal goals, realizing that there is a close connection between their success at school and their overall sense of well being. For example, for most students goals regarding drug use, personal appearance, sexual behavior, family relationships, etc. directly relate to their ability to achieve their academic goals. Staff assists students in looking at goal attainment in terms of very small steps as opposed to absolutes and perfection. Students learn to understand that peaks and valleys of functioning are normal, and they will not be ostracized for failure to maintain a consistently high rate of growth. This is especially important since these students are particularly vulnerable to rejection and loss.

Staff supports students completing high school, even if that requires longer than three years. Many students can benefit from the educational environment until age 19 or 20. SAIL staff believe that, in fact, school is the best place for most adolescents to enhance both their intellectual and emotional development. Furthermore, it has been the staff's experience that even the student who seems most bored and alienated, desperately wants to succeed and remain in school. Many students drop out and try to return numerous times; the attendance of former dropouts at graduation ceremonies to acknowledge their friends' success is a dramatic indicator of the significance attached to completing high school. In reality, students realize the importance of earning a diploma both for their vocational future as well as in terms of a symbolic rite of passage into adulthood.

Finally, staff believes in limited self disclosure. Staff's use of personal experiences seems to further facilitate trust building and enhance opportunities for role modeling. However, discretion is vital and group leaders must constantly ask themselves "whose needs am I meeting by sharing this information." Other considerations include not sharing current problem areas, and in general sharing only such information which has an outcome specifically targeted to meet student's needs.

Because these students have experienced a great amount of emotional pain in their lives and are currently struggling with making difficult changes, staff believes in the appropriate use of humor whenever possible. Laughter seems to provide energy and enhances feeling of comaraderie for both staff and students.

Basic Assumptions About Parent Involvement

SAIL staff believes that parents have a right to know on a regular basis how their son or daughter is doing in school. All parents receive information about their child's school functioning on a bi-weekly basis by phone, letter, or conference depending on which process they have negotiated with their SAIL staff person. In addition, SAIL staff also offers optional counseling services to parents and total families. Staff is empathetic to many parents' feeling of antagonism toward school. This antagonism is frequently a mask for their disappointment and frustration with their children. SAIL staff clearly communicates that they do not believe parents are wholly responsible for their son or daughter's current problems. It is assumed they parented their child to the very best of their ability, and the search for villians is not constructive. This message is directly communicated to parents in an initial conference.

SUMMARY

SAIL staff selected a group model of intervention with troubled adolescents as a major component of the SAIL program because it seemed to hold the most promise for facilitating maximum social and emotional growth and concommitantly, academic success.

However, providing group services within a public school setting entails some unique considerations not common to mental health facilities. This manual outlines the processes, policies, and actual program implementation with regard to the group component of the SAIL program which has been developed by the staff over the past two years. The first chapter specifically discusses the underlying beliefs and values held by the staff which have been fundamental to the evolution of the SAIL program.

These basic assumptions include:

1) A systems interpretation and treatment approach is most effective.

2) Change is possible.

3) Students are responsible for their own behavior.

4) The search for villians is not productive. Significant adults in the child's life have done the best they could at the time.

5) Accountability is essential. . .by students, parents, and staff.

6) Open communication between all facets of the system is crucial. . .students parents, faculty, administrators, community agency personnel, and SAIL staff.

7) Dropout-prone students need intensive assistance in overcoming the social/emotional obstacles which are interfering with their academic success. Modified curriculum and work experience programs are useful, but only tangential remedies for students' core problems.

8) School is the best place for most kids.

CHAPTER TWO: COMPOSITION, STRUCTURE, AND LEADERSHIP OF GROUP

Learning the best possible way to group students, setting a structure conducive for growth, and facilitating that growth through effective leadership has been an evolutionary process, continually refined and modified by SAIL staff. Although there is ever more to be learned and implemented, the SAIL staff has developed some primary guidelines for enhancing the likelihood that a group will produce maximum growth opportunities for students. These sets of guidelines can be divided into three categories: group composition, structure, and leadership of groups.

GROUP COMPOSITION

Group composition refers to the process by which students are selected to participate together in any given group. Specifically, this section addresses the following issues:

1) Scheduling
2) Group size
3) Heterogenous grouping
4) Selection of group candidates
5) Addition of new members
6) Staff/student ratios

Scheduling

Students are scheduled into group the same way they are scheduled into any other academic course. Students receive elective credit for participation in SAIL group. Staff believes this is crucial in order to further legitimize groups in the eyes of parents, the student themselves, and the mainstream faculty.

Students in SAIL are hand scheduled by SAIL staff unlike the rest of the student body at Lindbergh which select classes with the help of guidance counselors and are scheduled by a computer-based system. There may be instances when the scheduled group time is in conflict with a required course. It may not always be possible to place the student in the preferred group due to these scheduling conflicts.

Group Size

SAIL staff have found the ideal group size to be 7–8 students. However, to accomodate the natural process of attrition, groups begin with ten members. Thus it is not necessary to interrupt group continuity as frequently, with the addition of new members, in order to maintain a stable group size.

Heterogeneous Grouping

Having assessed individual students and determined that they are group candidates, the staff then attempts to combine these individuals in a way most conducive to their working together as a group. Co-ed groups seem to work better when balanced with regard to sex of the group members. However, this is not always feasible; it is important to have at least two and preferably three members of the same sex in a group of eight students. Generally, groups that are also heterogeneous with respect to the nature of individual's problems, behavioral manifestations, and age seem to function better than homogeneous groups. Passive and aggressive, verbal and non-verbal, hostile and supportive, are some of the behavioral continuums considered when staff attempts to group students heterogeneously. For example, leaders would not want to overload a group with a predominance of withdrawn students or "acting-out" students, but rather strive toward maintaining balance.

Often times students in SAIL have friends also in the program. Deciding if friends should be in the same group has been based on the quality of the relationship rather than any hard and fast rule. Some relationships are characterized by support for one another's growth and change, while others seem to inhibit progress. Again, observing the relationship prior to placing students in group is the best means for deciding if friends should go into the same or different groups.

The foregoing briefly covers the primary considerations in group composition. However, because group is an integral part of both the overall SAIL program and the mainstream school environment, other variables also impinge on the process for grouping students. Two such issues of particular impact to the SAIL staff have been determining staff/student ratios and caseloads and also the scheduling of groups.

Selection of Group Candidates

Although the SAIL population is composed of seriously troubled adolescents, it has been found that almost all of these students can benefit from participation in group and are appropriate group candidates. Isolating which variables preclude a student entering group is a complex process not yet fully clarified.[1] However, the staff has learned that the

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[1]Students who are usually "high" in group, chronic and unremorseful liars, and/or "out of touch" with reality, to mention a few, are examples of types of students who may not benefit from participation in group.

stronger the relationship between the potential group member and at least one of the leaders, the greater the chances that the student will function effectively in group. Thus, staff generally meet individually with students several weeks prior to placing them in group. This assessment period reduces the chances of any gross placement errors, and facilitates the development of a more meaningful Individual Educational Plan. Even so, all students enter group under a two to four week trial contract. If the staff decides during this trial period that a student is unable to benefit from group participation, the Individual Educational Plan is revised and the student receives services on a one-to-one basis.

Addition of New Group Members

Adding new members to a group is always disruptive. By bringing in two new members simultaneously, the chances are reduced that the group will label either of them as the "intruder" or "outsider." To lend the group greater stability, new members are added only at certain prescribed times, specifically at the quarter and mid-quarter breaks in the academic calendar.

Leaders have total control over membership and entry process for group. Group leaders inform the group ahead of time that new students will be entering, and include the group in deciding the specific time and activities for the entry process. Most often groups will have some negative feelings about anyone new coming into their system. If a leader, however, senses a strongly negative reaction from the group toward a particular person, it may well be a contra-indication to the placement of that student in the group.

Any time new members are added, the group must review its contract regarding confidentiality. Intense issues are ignored in group temporarily while trust is re-established and common bonds evolve. Following the addition of new members, leaders select lower threat activities for the group and design situations that will enhance the integration of new members.

Staff/Student Ratios

The SAIL staff strives to keep caseloads balanced. In compliance with special education guidelines regarding Level III services, each staff person carries a maximum caseload of fifteen families at any one time. SAIL staff hold weekly intake meetings in order that new referrals from the Child Study Team may receive services immediately. The process by which new students entering the program are assigned a staff member (contact person) is determined by numerous factors. An attempt is made to keep caseloads relatively equal among SAIL staff. It is also advisable for co-leaders to be case managers for an equal number of students in their SAIL group. Therefore, it is possible that a staff member who might need additional members for a group may not necessarily pick up new students because he/she is already carrying a heavier caseload than other staff. Likewise, a staff member with a small caseload who then picks up a new student may not have an opening in group. Another variable to be considered is staff's involvement with other family members or significant peers.

Consequently many factors are considered in matching a new student with a staff case manager. Despite this, students are never placed on a waiting list; all students referred to SAIL by the school's child study team receive full and immediate SAIL services.

STRUCTURE

Developing a clear and explicit structure for group is crucial for its success. The structure provides leaders with a tool for assessing where the group is in terms of developmental stages, as well as the current level of functioning for each individual student in the treatment process. For students, the structure facilitates initial trust building by providing a reliable and predictable framework.

Group structure can be modified over time as leaders gain a better understanding of individual student needs. The structure may be tight or loose: the important point being that there is some clarity and continuity. The following areas should be considered in establishing the structure for a group.

1) Location
2) Frequency and duration of sessions
3) Attendance policy
4) Group rules

Location

Sail has found that it is important to have one location designated as "the SAIL area" rather than using a variety of spaces scattered throughout the school building. This legitimizes the program in both the students' and the faculty's eyes, provides students with a place to be during independent study time and guarantees that there is always at least one staff member available for students. At Lindbergh High School, the SAIL area is located adjacent to the guidance offices. It consists of several small rooms with one reception area.

Group sessions are held in space which has been enclosed with room dividers within the SAIL area. Because of the design of the school, there is minimal privacy, which has been problematic. A constant location is an important predictable variable of group, giving students a sense of their own space. Territoriality is an important consideration in working with adolescents in general, but is particularly significant with students who have experienced rejection. Privacy is an additional important consideration.

Frequency and Duration of Sessions

Initially groups were held four times per week for one hour and twenty minutes. In addition, however, students requested individual time with staff to discuss issues which they considered too personal to bring up in group (i.e. getting an abortion, physical abuse at home, etc.) To accomodate this need, the structure was modified to three groups per week for one hour and twenty minutes plus one weekly individual session. A once per week group was also tried, but it did not seem to meet frequently enough to satisfy students' needs.

Individual sessions are now used more flexibly than as just a time to discuss personal issues. This time may also be used to negotiate a contract between a student and a teacher, have a family conference, work on an assignment, or talk informally with the SAIL staff.

The individual session also provides a unique opportunity for the leader to enhance a student's group functioning. This time can be used to encourage a student to be more confrontive, supportive or assertive in group (to mention a few). It also gives the leader an opportunity to shape desirable group behaviors, i.e. encouraging the student to bring up particular issues or give other group members feedback. It is important that the leader not allow the individual session to dilute or divert the power of the group. Thus students can discuss group only within the context of how they would like to modify their own behavior in the group. It is not appropriate in these sessions to discuss feelings about other group members; such issues are better discussed within the group itself.

Attendance Policy

To further legitimize SAIL in the mainstream school environment, students receive elective credit for participation in the program. Such an explicit outcome for participation facilitates the staff setting firm expectations regarding attendance. This is critical because the dynamics of a group are variable and are dependent upon stable group composition. When attendance is sporadic and changeable the opportunities for the development of trust and cohesion are greatly reduced. Students are allowed up to six absences (illnesses and/or skips) each quarter in order to remain eligible for receiving credit. Students are also required to make up the time for each missed session. Students spend their make-up time doing homework in the SAIL area during their independent study time or after school.

Consistent with other classes, group begins and ends at a pre-specified time; students are expected to be on time and to stay throughout the session. This structure is further ritualized by requiring students to make a comment both at the beginning and the end of group about how they are feeling.

Offering credit for group also makes it more explicit that there is a task or work to be done, just as in any other course. For SAIL students, the focus is improving their overall school performance. Goal Attainment Scaling is the tool used to assess students' progress.

Goals are individually negotiated between each student and their contact person around improved school performance and related personal growth areas. Each student develops approximately ten different behavioral goals. These goals are scored every Friday in group by putting the date in the box which corresponds to their performance that week. Students are required to meet an average of 50 percent of their goals each quarter to be eligible for credit. This weekly focus on goals is a continuous reminder to students of the purpose of SAIL and of their participation in the group. Goals also serve to structure the content discussed in group by making explicit the areas each student is working on.

Group Rules

The final structure for the group has to do with setting some rules about acceptable behaviors within the group. These are kept to a minimum so as not to overwhelm members, and to avoid placing leaders in a policing role. This allows for maximum flexibility and spontaneity in group. SAIL staff has the following expectations for group:

1) Confidentiality: Members are not to discuss group outside of group. This is extremely important to students if they are to risk sharing anything personal in group. It is an issue that the staff continually struggles with in terms of setting boundaries for what is important to share with faculty and parents, and what must be kept confidential between student and SAIL staff.

2) Honesty: Students are expected to be honest during group. Dishonesty within the group inhibits trust and makes resolution of issues very difficult.

3) Respect: Students are expected to be respectful of one another. Group members may confront another member's behavior, but it is unacceptable to attack another person. Each member has the right not to discuss an issue or respond to a question. If students are to make themselves vulnerable in group they must be assured that they are not opening themselves for personal attack.

4) Chemical Use: Students are expected to be chemically free during group sessions. Chemical use distorts reality and makes it difficult to respond fully to others or to receive feedback accurately.

These four requirements define the structure set for the group by the leaders. The school itself also has structure which impinges upon the group. It is incumbent upon group leaders to utilize that existing structure to their advantage. Grading periods, vacations, and school rules are examples of existing structures which can be utilized to blend with and enhance structures developed by group leaders.

LEADERSHIP

When the SAIL program began, the staff unanimously decided to use a co-leadership model, primarily to quell their own anxieties about facilitating a group. The original plan included moving to a single leadership model as staff became more comfortable. Although staff now feel competent in leading groups, the co-leadership model remains as an important part of the overall program. There are a number of reasons this style of leadership has been retained:

1) Teaming allows for both process and content to be simultaneously monitored during group.

2) One leader is able to be supportive and the other confrontive. It is important, however, that leaders alternate these roles.

3) Leaders can validate or challenge one another's perceptions which adds greater impact to feedback given to students.

4) Teaming provides an opportunity for modeling, especially conflict resolution and mutual support.

5) Students benefit from two distinct role models who may have diverse opinions and values, and in general, differing perspectives on issues.

6) Shared leadership takes the pressure off a single leader to "make or break" it and gives each the option to sit back occasionally to observe the process more carefully.

7) Group can still be held if one leader must be absent.

8) The leadership role has more power with two leaders than with one.

9) A group member is less likely to inappropriately assume the co-leadership role.

10) Complementary but different leadership styles can enhance the probability for a successful group.

11) Co-leadership is supportive to each leader individually, offering each the opportunity to check out perceptions, treatment plans, strategies, etc.

Staff leadership teams are selected based on scheduling constraints and personal preferences. All staff maintain an overall directive stance in group because of the nature of the SAIL population. Within that orientation, their styles are as varied as the individual leaders. It has been found that the particular style the group leader uses is less important than that the style is congruent with the leader's personality.

Leaders select group members from their own respective caseloads. Each staff person is responsible for preparing his/her own students for entry into group, and continues to maintain primary responsibility for those students after they are in group. One way of preparing students for group is to help the student write one or two goals specifically designed to enhance their group participation. Staff also prepare students for group by carefully explaining the purpose of group as well as the group rules. Students are not placed in group until rapport has been established with the staff person.

Time is set aside immediately before each group session begins in order for group leaders to plan. This enables them to update one another on their respective students and to plan around any major events that may have occurred since group last met. Leaders also meet after group to process the group, giving each other feedback, and making tentative plans for the next session. Planning and debriefing are critical for optimal group functioning. It is especially important when staff first begin teaming together because there may be numerous style and value differences to be worked through so that the leaders enhance rather than undermine one another.

It has been found that same-sexed groups function better with same-sexed leaders; co-ed groups function better with a co-ed leadership team. However since the SAIL staff has four female group leaders and only one male leader, several co-ed groups are lead by a female team. While this is not ideal, it has certainly been workable.

SUMMARY

There is no way to guarantee a successful group. However, attention to group composition, structure, and leadership significantly enhance the chances for a group's success.

Group composition refers to the way in which students are grouped together. Reality issues existing in any school setting often reduce the potential for scheduling students in groups in ideal combinations. However, it is imperative to consider the following primary issues in group formation: scheduling, group size, heterogeneous grouping, selection of group candidates, addition of new members, and staff/student ratios.

It is crucial that a group have an explicit structure which has been established and maintained by the group leaders. The framework provides important assessment data for leaders and facilitates the initial trust building focus of the group. Areas to consider in developing the structure are location, frequency and duration, attendance policy, and group rules. It is important that leaders create a structure that is compatible with existing rules in the mainstream school setting.

The leadership of a group plays an integral role in the success of that group. SAIL has adopted a co-leadership model because of the numerous benefits it provides the group. SAIL staff's leadership style in general tends to be directive; it is necessary, however, that each staff person's approach be congruent with his/her own personality. Differing leadership styles within co-leader teams can enhance group functioning.

CHAPTER THREE: STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

This chapter describes the normal development of a school based, adolescent group from beginning to end. Group begins with a loosely formed collection of individuals with varying degrees of school related problems and ideally develops into a highly cohesive network.

This group process will be described in terms of five developmental stages which are hierarchical in nature, but occur in a spiral fashion throughout the life of the group.

TRUST BUILDING

This stage involves the formation of beginning relationships as group members gather and share information about one another, identify similarities and differences, and make initial judgements about the leadership structure.

COHESIVENESS

This stage is characterized by the beginnings of a group identity, the discovery of common goals, and individual commitment to the group.

POWER

This stage is characterized by individual members testing the limits of the group leadership structure and the group's exploration of its own sense of autonomy and power with regard to group rules and norms.

INTIMACY

This stage involves the commitment to the challenge of personal sharing, the relationship issues of confrontation and support, as well as the examination of individual strengths and weaknesses.

TERMINATION

> This final stage is characterized by the exploration of the various feelings relating to the end of group. These feeling typically involve varying degrees of denial, bargaining, anger, sadness and acceptance as well as excitement and the realization of personal accomplishments and growth.

Each stage in this developmental process builds upon the tasks and issues of the previous stages and is hierarchical in nature.

Labeling these stages does not adequately summarize the complex dynamics of each stage, however, it does help the group leader identify and characterize the major themes at each level. It is very helpful for the group leader to fully comprehend the issues involved within each stage before attempting to design facilitative group strategies.

An understanding of this developmental process is also essential in order for the group leader to accurately interpret the behavior of an individual with the group as that behavior corresponds to the current stage of development. In other words, the acting out of an individual group member can be perceived, in part, as a barometer for the group. For example, rather than interpreting the angry defiant outburst of an otherwise cooperative group member as an expression of rejection towards the group, an experienced group leader might interpret this anger as resulting from anxiety triggered by the impending termination of the group, which the group member is acting out for all the members in the group.

In reality, these stages are intertwined with one another and evolve in a spiral rather than a linear manner. Themes resolved during earlier stages will reoccur at later stages of development. For example, the theme of trust will reoccur several times during the normal evolution of a group, especially following particularly stressful group sessions.

In addition to describing the stages of group development in theoretical terms, this chapter also cites individual and group behaviors characteristic to each stage. By capturing as much of the experiential flavor as possible it is hoped that a more meaningful view of the development of school groups can be attained.

This section is intended to provide group leaders with an overview of group development with the desired outcome of assisting group leaders who may have at times been tempted to let their groups "do their own thing" for lack of understanding of what is happening in the group. This brief overview is not intended to minimize the complexity of group behavior nor is it designed to replace academic and experiential preparation required for successful group leadership.

TRUST BUILDING

The primary task in the first stage is the development of trust. Far from being members of the group, the participants are attempting to gather enough information about each other and the group structure so that they can decide whether or not it is safe for them to join psychologically. One of the basic conflicts inherent in this decision is determining whether or not they, as beginning group members, can identify enough similarities between themselves and others in the group without losing a sense of their individuality and uniqueness. With regard to this conflict one group member stated, "I'm not here because I'm exactly like all of you, I'm just in the same boat. I screwed up in school."

Some individuals will enter into this task with enthusiasm, appearing to be at ease and delighted with the prospect of joining a group. It is often difficult to ascertain the difference between honest enthusiasm and compliance at this stage. Other students respond with guarded caution or pessimism about the group, choosing to remain silent or offering minimal comments. It is not uncommon for one or more individuals to express disgust for "being stuck in SAIL" and make these feelings known to all. Typical of this denial reaction is the individual who states, "I have nothing in common with anyone else here and I never will." Frequently individuals in groups at this stage seek out beginning coalitions with others as a way of coping with tension and uncertainty.

The various responses of students when placed in a group reflect individual reactions and feelings to this new situation. Fear, apprehension, and distrust are typical emotions which group members experience at this stage.

Some groups evolve a kind of joviality which appears completely free of conflict and anxiety. While in this period of "sweetness and light" they may seem capable of talking for hours without running out of topics. Jokes, detailed accounts of personal exploits, and checking out "who knows who" exemplify this type of atmosphere. This coping mechanism may continue "successfully" for many sessions as the group members strive to keep the underlying tension from surfacing. When this tension surfaces in the form of unwanted silence, it is quickly filled in with additional conversation.

Another major factor in the beginning group concerns the prospective group members' assessment of the leadership. Whether or not perspective members can trust the group leaders to create and maintain a tolerable group structure is the key to this variable. If students determine that the adult leaders are competent individuals at ease with their roles and able to keep the group moving at a reasonable pace, this will seem to be at least temporarily resolved.

Beginning groups have several ways of finding out how reliable, responsive and trustworthy the leaders are. In addition, group members typically check out the leaders with regard to their feelings about students who fail in school and their naivete concerning the younger generation in general. The following list illustrates some of the behaviors which emerge as students clarify and evaluate the leadership structure of the group.

1. Silence or minimal participation
2. Playing dumb
3. Coming late to group
4. Using shocking language
5. Inappropriate physical behavior

The various responses of individual students at this stage underscores the need for leadership structure. Through the use of appropriately planned activities, structured openings and endings, a clear statement of limits, and by avoiding excessive open ended questions the group leader can facilitate this difficult stage.

In summary, groups at this stage have various responses to the underlying tension of a new group and respond by seeking information about one another as well as clarifying the leadership structure. As these issues begin to be resolved, group members feel more secure about themselves and the group and are ready to move on to the next stage of cohesiveness.

COHESIVENESS

Groups at the cohesiveness stage are beginning to identify as a group. Increasing amounts of unanimous decisions and commonalities occur as the group begins to become more cohesive. Ritualized small talk and other elements from the trust building stage still occur but last for shorter amounts of time as the group moves toward its newly discovered task of making decisions. Central to this activity is the establishment of goals that are common to all members. Goals such as graduating from high school, staying out of trouble at school, attending classes instead of cutting, and getting to school on time are examples of positive goals that groups can unite behind. One group member stated, "We are the bunch that almost dropped out." In response to this the group leader summarized, "It's surprising that everyone here has the goal of graduating from high school."

Occasionally groups at this stage can also establish negative goals which can ultimately endanger the formation of the group. An example of a negative goal that one group adopted for time related to "never talking about anything having to do with home or personal matters." Although this did disrupt the degree of personal disclosure, it was an important part of the developmental process of the group.

In this stage group members begin making commitments to the group. Common goals are established and required by all. One group member may announce, "Alright, we all need to get at least half of our goals so that we can go to breakfast for our next group. Does everyone agree?" Other commitments may involve doing something for the good of the group such as making ending comments quickly so that everyone can leave on time. The motto "one for all, all for one," becomes the primary criterion of group decision making.

Another characteristic of a group at the cohesive stage is the unanimous reference to "we" when talking about the group. This emerging cohesiveness frequently serves to inhibit the surfacing of any conflict at this stage. As group members begin to feel more at ease, a sense of calmness becomes evident. At this stage most group members experience varying degrees of joy and enthusiasm in the group and become more animated in their behavior. Doing things together outside of group such as playing frisbee or having a snack are behaviors which occur with greater frequency. Group members begin to feel safe.

In addition to this, a feeling of group loyalty evolves. This is particularly evident as group members readily agree to follow the adult leaders' suggestions. An example of this phenomenon occurred during an outdoor session when one group member said, "Come on you guys, why don't we just not smoke and keep our leaders happy by just playing frisbee." Another example relates to the decision of a group to start exactly one time in order to "keep the leaders happy."

In summary, at the cohesiveness stage individuals begin to identify as being part of a group with a common purpose. Shared goals and unanimous decisions characterize this stage. The surfacing of conflict is virtually non-existent. The next stage, power, is in sharp contrast to this blissful stage.

POWER

Groups in this stage are interested in pursuing and discovering the limits of their own power as well as the testing of individual autonomy. This ranges from the discovery of appropriate assertiveness to the use of inappropriate aggression.

Groups discover the limits of their own power through a process of conflict with the authority figures of the group, the adult leaders. Often this takes the form of a mini-revolution in which the basic question, "Who controls this group?" is the major focus. Group sessions during this stage frequently resemble a bargaining session in which a student negotiator states the demands for the group. One such negotiation resulted in the unanimous decision that all group members, including the leaders, were sworn to secrecy regarding the content of anything said or done in group. This coupled with the group's sense of trust for the leadership facilitated two group members' disclosure that they had cut all of their classes the day before.

Frequently "tests" of confidentiality are pursued at this stage with increased pressure on the adult leaders to "tell about something that you don't want other teachers to know." An explicit confidentiality rule is essential at this stage and requires more commitment from all group members than it did at the trust building stage. Later, it will again spiral into focus at the intimacy stage.

During this stage, groups will often negotiate to assume some of the leadership functions of the group. An example of this includes the taking over of openings and endings by the students in a group because they felt "better able to get things going in a group than the leaders." This illustrates an appropriate use of power which resulted in greater student involvement in the beginning of group each day. These demands are in reality a

way of finding out which things are negotiable in the group and which are not. The ability of the group leaders to maintain a balance is crucial to the stability of the group during this onslaught of demands.

This conflict ladened stage is characterized by feelings of anger, tension, and at times exhaustion. Students are occasionally surprised at their own evolving sense of power and its ultimate expression in group. After negotiating a change in meeting location, one group member summarized, "I've never been part of a class at school where we were able to do this."

In addition to group power issues, individual issues relating to autonomy and authority surface during this stage. An example of this phenomenon occurred when one group member announced to the leaders, "Since today should have been a holiday, I told everyone that group was cancelled!" This illustrates the type of power struggle that individuals will set up in order to test the leadership structure. The ability of the group leaders to respond with appropriate firmness is essential in resolving situations in a productive and facilitative manner. This is particularly important as it serves as a model and enables group members to have a firmer grasp of the boundaries between adults and adolescents.

Less direct expressions of defiance also occur at this stage. One group member made it a point to swagger into group five minutes late wearing a dulled razor blade which dangled from a necklace around his neck. This is a dramatic example of a student's provocative behavior toward a group leader and obviously underscores the importance of effective strategies in working with individual's behavior at this stage.

Despite the trying moments of the power stage, such as a student lighting up a cigarette during a group session or an entire group showing up twenty minutes late, the positive effects of power exploration are far reaching. The development of more democratic decision making model and the implementation of shared leadership roles are two examples.

In summary, a group at the power stage realizes and struggles with the use of autonomy and authority. Frequent bargaining sessions and power struggles with group leaders characterize the growth of a group toward a new sense of self direction and responsibility and prepares them to meet the challenges of the next stage, intimacy.

INTIMACY

This stage provides increased challenges and opportunities for group members to share personal feelings, offer expressions of support and confrontation, and ultimately reassess their own strengths and weaknesses. The evolution of new group norm—"talking about your problems"—emerges as group members test the thin ice of self disclosure. As some group members risk sharing something about themselves, new insights are gained. After talking about an experience in her childhood, one group member confided, "I've never told anyone about that, not even my sister who knows everything there is to know about me." It is important that group leaders realize the vulnerability of group members especially at the onset of this stage. Care should be taken to facilitate a supportive and secure atmosphere which is responsive and respectful in nature. Often group leaders can

initiate general discussions of values or emotionally ladened topics in order to ease a group into intimacy.

As the stage evolves group members develop increasing trust with one another. The group norm becomes personal sharing. Statements like, "I never thought I would feel like I wanted anyone to know about the real me," "I guess we all have many of the same fears" typify the newly found insight discovered at this stage.

Another phenonenon occurs when a group member risks sharing messages of confrontation and support with another group member. One group member, after considerable thought said, "This is hard for me to say Darlene, but I think all of your problems are just a cover. You always get teary and look at the floor instead of doing something about it. I'm sick of it and I think other people are too." Confrontations of this nature often challenge group members to reassess currently practiced behaviors and attitudes. The goal of such sessions is to provide support and encouragement as individuals seek new solutions to their problems.

Frequently this stage evolves to its fullest degree as group members sense that the end of the group is in sight as the school year comes to a close. Since they have limited time remaining they feel increased pressure to make use of group time and frequently respond by "reserving" time to talk about personal problems they want to resolve.

Significant traumatic life events, deaths, physical and/or sexual abuse, humiliation, fears, and inadequacies, are examples of topics shared by group members in the intimacy stage. A new group norm regarding the acceptability of showing otherwise hidden or controlled emotions evolves at this stage. At the end of one session, a group member said, "I like the way we are able to sit without talking and feel close."

With the increased emotionality and vulnerability of the intimacy stage group members characteristically need to redefine parameters of confidentiality. Trust again becomes a major focus as group members struggle with the extent to which they are willing to share. In light of the fear and loneliness that often surfaces during the intimacy stage, trust is essential in providing a warm and caring atmosphere for the resolution of such issues.

In summary, the major task of this stage lies in the exploration of individual vulnerabilities. During the intimacy stage, group leaders must be particularly aware of the vulnerability of group members. Care must be taken to facilitate a supportive and secure atmosphere within which students can risk sharing personal issues. It is at this stage in the groups development that the most "work" takes place. Group members are explicitly involved in the task of sharing strengths and weaknesses with one another and seek to resolve issues central to their school and personal problems. Silence in this stage does not indicate resistance, but rather becomes a common and permissible way of communicating shared feelings and belonging. Since this is frequently the first intimate experience most students have experienced with a group, it is especially hard to move ahead to the final developmental stage of termination. The sense of impending loss necessitates a sensitive, well-planned transition to this last stage.

TERMINATION

This final stage involves all of the dynamics of separation as group members experience varying degrees of denial, anger, bargaining, sadness and acceptance. The primary task of this stage begins with the realization that group will end. Groups have several different kinds of defensive mechanisms designed to deny the reality that group will actually end. This denial is illustrated by a group who designed an elaborate phone calling system which was to ultimately result in a final group meeting during the summer at the wedding of one of its members. This bargaining attempt served to keep the group alive temporarily in a fantasy way at least.

Another group made several frustrating attempts at celebrating the end of the year by planning a special dinner. After setting up three dates the group finally agreed to a dinner which could not be attended by all of its members. The reactions of the members at the dinner serves to illustrate another point– individuals respond to separation differently even within the context of a group. One member of the group cried through the entire evening stating that she, "was just beginning to feel a part of the group and now it was going to be over." Another member stated that group "never meant anything to her" and was angry about the way it ended. A third group member stated that, "she would be able to be part of a group next year so it really wasn't a big deal." Each individual responds to the issue of termination in a dramatically different way.

Often during the termination stage, individuals will regress for a period of time and try on "old" behaviors which they have previously been in the process of discarding. An example of this involves a student who used to sleep late on school mornings. When the group confronted her about her second late morning in a row, she responded by saying, "Don't worry, I just didn't want my mom to think I was perfect." This regression is normal and can be expected of most group members at one time or another at this stage.

Groups also respond to termination as they are cued and influenced by the leaders. Thus it is important for group leaders to be aware of their own struggles with termination. With this in mind it is essential to clarify student needs and leader needs and maintain a healthy balance for the productive resolution of these issues.

Typically a group will "ritualize" its ending by planning a special celebration. Other characteristic behaviors of groups at this stage include: reminiscing about the earlier group, sharing regrets, talking about how people have changed, remembering what they will miss, and fantasizing about new beginnings. One group member related, "It's too bad that you two guys are leaving the group now because I really am going to do much better next semester." Frequently a sense of accomplishment and excitement surfaces as group members review the year.

In summary, the termination stage is focused upon the realization that group is ending and the exploration of the various feelings which naturally occur. During this stage, groups experience one or more of the phases of loss, denial, anger, bargaining, sadness, and acceptance, as well as excitement and the realization personal accomplishments and growth.

SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the normal development of a school based group from formation to termination. In addition to describing the five stages of group development: trust building, cohesiveness, power, intimacy and termination, it included specific examples of characteristic behavior at each stage. In general the stages of development are hierarchical, although they progress in a spiral rather than linear manner. It is hoped that this chapter provides a theoretical framework for group leaders so that appropriate planning can take place, and that the dynamics of the group can be interpreted in the context of the group's developmental stage.

CHAPTER FOUR: WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS IN SAIL GROUP

The process of assessing the needs and developing appropriate plans for each individual group is at least as important as the actual activities which emerge. In preparing for each group session, SAIL staff observe the following guidelines:

1. The co-leaders spend 10–20 minutes planning together immediately prior to each group session.

2. In planning group, the co-leaders consider the following issues:

   a) What is the stage of group development? This changes over time as a group may progress steadily for awhile but suddenly regress to an earlier stage in response to increased stress.

   b) What is the tone or personality of each group? Some groups consistently focus on personal issues, others are more like families, while others concentrate on school. The styles of the leadership team also affects this tone.

   c) What happened in the previous group? The leaders sometimes alternate stressful and low-threat activities in groups.

   d) What are the current issues for each student in the group? The state of each group member immediately prior to group is considered by the group leaders.

3. The co-leaders prepare a plan which includes options. They are flexible and use "teachable moments," dropping what has been prepared if that seems most appropriate.

4. The co-leaders are adventurous, and may try an idea they think might have potential or just be fun.

5. The co-leaders attempt to see a "flop" as part of normal growth process for the group (and the group leaders).

6. When "debriefing" group, the co-leaders brainstorm potential topics or activities for the next group session.

The question most frequently asked by visitors to the SAIL program is, "But what do you actually do in SAIL groups?" This chapter will present some of the activities, strategies, and leader interventions used by the SAIL staff. It is not an inclusive list, but merely some of the ideas SAIL staff have found to be effective. It is important to adapt and develop strategies that are uniquely suited for each particular school setting.

Chapter 3 presented the various stages in a group's normal development. Each stage of development has two or three primary tasks that need to be accomplished in order for the group to move ahead to the next stage. This chapter will focus on the various activities which accompany each of these tasks.

PRIMARY TASKS INHERENT IN THE STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

TRUST

Information sharing
Clarifying structure

COHESION

Forming a sense of group
Building common goals

POWER

Testing structure
Asserting group power
Establishing individual autonomy

INTIMACY

Sharing personal issues
Confronting relationship issues

TERMINATION

Expressing feelings
Testing previous behaviors
Facing ending

TRUST BUILDING ACTIVITIES

This initial level of group development may be very brief or last several months. The need for trust building may be present to some extent at the beginning of each group session. It may also need to be reestablished by the group at regular intervals, particularly after an especially intense group—thus the phenomena of one terrific group followed by a terrible one. Therefore, the trust building exercises cited in this section might be used throughout the life of the group even though the group has already progressed to more advanced stages.

A common aspect of many trust building exercises is the expectation that all group members participate at least minimally—to get people to talk. Another goal is simply for people to get some information about one another and find out how they are similar and how they are different. The activities used during the trust stage help students become familiar with the leadership structure regarding expectations and limits.

The following strategies and activities are representative of many variations used by the SAIL staff. They also may be appropriate for reestablishing trust at other stages. Again, the process rather than the content is the primary concern for group development.

Information Sharing

Students entering group are curious about who the others in group are, and want to know, "Are we similar or different?" Leaders need to structure activities which will facilitate student's learning about one another. These might include:

1. Having students describe how they got into SAIL.

2. Pairing students with someone they don't know for 5 minutes with the expectation they introduce their partner to the group.

3. Sharing reasons students have dropped out of school and their decision to return to school.

4. Having students create a personal name tag which they share with group including information such as their favorite song, person they most admire, weather forecast that describes them, 3 adjectives that describe them, place where they were born, favorite book, etc.

5. Sharing goals by scoring them in dyads and reporting on them to the entire group.

6. Discussing low threat topics initiated by the leader such as:

   - Three things you like to eat.
   - Funniest thing that ever happened to you.
   - Personal strengths, hobbies, activities, etc.
   - Favorite food--setting, people, when did you eat it last, when will you eat it again?
   - Your favorite, most comfortable times
   - Teachers that you admire—dislike—are helpful.
   - Favorite subjects
   - What do you hate about school?
   - What kind of groups are there in school?
   - What teachers do you have in common?

7. Building collages that depict things each group member enjoys which are then shared with the total group.

Clarifying Structure

Students need to know the structure of group and what is expected of them. They also need to know the leaders will react and whether or not they can be trusted to take charge. In the trust building stage it must be emphasized that students are checking out the clarity of the rules. In the power stage they will be testing these rules.

Following are some activities leaders might use to facilitate students clarifying structure.

1. Ritualizing the structure through use of "Openings" and "Endings." This is a way to start and end group by asking each member to respond to a question such as:

   - How was your weekend?
   - How did (or will you) take care of yourself this weekend?
   - One thing you want to work on this week in school.
   - Where are things with school, family, friends?

- Things you liked "very much"–"so-so"–and "not at all" about this week at school.

- How did you feel about the way we spent group today? (most common ending)

2. Modeling desirable behaviors for group members.

   - Informing students in advance when the leader anticipates being absent or late.

   - Listening and giving students eye contact when they speak.

   - Being in group on time.

3. Talking explicitly about rules and expectations.

   - Students cannot miss more than six groups to be elegible for credit.

   - Students are expected to be on time for group.

   - Students are expected to be chemically free while in group.

4. Discussing consequences for not following rules.

   - If you are more than ten minutes late to group, you must make up the whole session.

   - If you do not make up missed sessions by the end of the quarter you will not be eligible for credit.

5. Reviewing absences periodically throughout the quarter to remind students where they stand on make up and credit.

   - You have 4 absences and will fail if you have 2 more.

6. Sharing the confidentiality policy.

   - Information shared in group is not to leave group.

7. Responding to both positive and negative student behaviors to give students a better sense about the leaders' predictability. Behaviors that warrant a response:

   - Bringing food to group.
   - Being late to group.
   - Putting feet on the table.
   - Sharing something personal.
   - Asking for support with teacher.

COHESION BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Cohesion is an exciting stage of group development as the leaders begin to see and have a feeling of group members working together as a whole, not just as a set of individuals. Initially the students only see the benefits that they gain individually but later they may begin to care about group outcomes and their contribution to that end. They are much more willing to participate in group activities and unite behind group leaders.

The major tasks for a group at the cohesion stage of group development are forming a sense of group through sharing commonalities and building common goals. A sense of group can be facilitated by helping students see what they have in common or how they are similar to each other.

1. Emphasizing group membership through:

   - Suggesting that groups call an absent member at home.
   - Suggesting the group go to find a missing member.
   - Placing a name card at absent member's seat.
   - Letting people know the whereabouts of any absent members.

2. Taking a group portrait which might be made into a poster for group room.

3. Establishing commonalities of group members. This may look like a structured story telling.

   - What was Jr. High like for each of you?
   - What was your most embarrassing moment?
   - What have been your experiences with counseling?

- What are the "clicks" in this school? Where do you think you belong?
- What class do you hate most? Like most?
- How did each of you experience phy. ed. or health, etc.?
- Why are you in SAIL?
- How many people need to work on attendance? How can we support each other on that?
- Sharing common fantasies—How do you imagine graduation?
- What goals do each of you have that are similar?
- Deciding to decorate the group room.
- Planning field trip with each student taking a part.
- Doing something silly together like carving Halloween pumpkins, blowing bubbles with bubble gum, thumb wrestling, etc.
- Planning for group members bringing treats to group each Friday.
- Brainstorming to solve an individual's problem such as, "getting to phy. ed." or "how to approach a teacher."
- Working on a specific mutual concern of all group members:

  —Lets each make a list of all the things that we need to to accomplish before the end of the week.

  —How can we help one another get to class or do assignments or get to school in the morning.
- Giving the group a forced choice—"I have two options of what we might do today—would you like to predict what your grades will be for the quarter or start by planning our field trip."
- What would you like to do for an ending comment? What you gave to group today or one class that you plan to work on before next group.

ASSERTING POWER

Power situations often occur spontaneously but also can be facilitated by the group's leaders. It is important that leaders recognize this stage and see it as a normal developmental process. Then the power struggle can be perceived in terms of the process it represents and can be utilized to clarify or reestablish issues of structure, rules and especially trust in leaders. Students often set up struggles to find out if leaders are really in charge and whether or not they will follow through on what they said they would. If leaders do lose significant control over the group, it is often followed by tremendous guilt in the group members which is difficult to counteract. It is crucial in this stage for students to find out clearly what power they do have and what roles are reserved for leaders. It is also important for a student to establish his/her own power over self at this stage. This clarification provides the security for intimacy to occur later in the group.

SAIL group leaders facilitate the power stage by using strategies which support student's: 1) testing structure, 2) asserting group power, and 3) establishing individual autonomy.

Testing Structure

Students will test to see which rules leaders will enforce and which can be bent.

1. Enforcing program policies on attendance, make up time, chemical use, scoring goals, credit requirements, etc.

    - I'm sorry you got sick this week, but you've already had six absences this quarter so you will not be able to get credit.

    - You must make up your missed groups whether or not it was a legitimate absence.

2. Clarifying leader's role as a group leader, not a friend or peer. Students may say things such as:

    - Whose side are you on? This is with regard to: tardiness, bailing them out of classes they've failed, siding with them against parents, teachers and administrators.

    - If you don't do this for me, I'm going to drop out.

    - How is your husband or wife? This is with regard to getting leaders to respond to personal questions.

    - Do you like Mrs. Jones (English teacher)? This is with regard to getting the leader to relate to them as a peer, not as a student.

Asserting Group Power

A group leader can help a group develop the security of knowing their limits with structure. He/she can also give them a sense of their power by utilizing certain strategies.

1. Renegotiating the ways that rules are carried out to fit the particular needs of group. These rules might be in the areas of confidentiality, honesty, openings and closing, etc.

    - We need to score goals each Friday--you can choose to do them individually, in pairs or in front of the whole group.

    - Nothing we say in group should leave this room—however you might want to negotiate discussing it after checking that out with the group.

    - We always do "endings" but do you want to think of a different one?

2. Setting up opportunity to negotiate on issues.

    - You don't seem to like our suggestions for group today. If you can think of something better, we'll do that.

    - We need to write new goals this week. Do you want to do them in group or during your individual time with the group leader?

    - What would be a good group reward for perfect attendance this week?

3. Fantasizing power outcomes of group as a unit.

    - What would you like to accomplish as a group?

    - What do you think we could change in this school if we decided to work together as a group?

Establishing Individual Autonomy

As the group identity and strength becomes more evident, it is important for a student to have a sense of his/her own separateness and strength. This can be facilitated in the following ways:

1. Honoring the group rule of the individual's rights.

   - Supporting student if he/she says, "I don't want to discuss this issue." If appropriate, the group leader may say, "Sometime I hope You'll choose to share that with us."

   - Respecting the student's right to see things differently. "I don't think my attitude in English is the problem."

   - Respecting the right of a student not to want to talk on any given day.

2. Giving power to negotiate positive and negative personal consequences for actions.

   - Twenty-day contract—20 days of perfect attendance students gets one day off of school.

   - Contracted for chance to pass SAIL (after student had passed limit). One more miss during quarter will mean no credit in SAIL—0 additional misses with all time made up will give student a passing grade.

CREATING INTIMACY

In this stage the group member often are the most vulnerable and take the most "risks." Therefore it is particularly important for the leaders to be very sensitive to individual needs as well as to facilitate as safe and secure an environment as possible for the students. Although students at this stage often initiate group discussion and sometimes almost seem to "run their own group" it is even more crucial for the leaders to be in charge and facilitate positive outcomes for the members. It is important that a student feel somewhat put together when finishing a group even though he/she may have been very vulnerable during the session. Because rules and structural issues have been clarified at an earlier stage, the content of this stage is personal and focused on relationship issues. This is the stage where the student is most likely to change due to owning behavior and making personal choices about their lives.

Sharing Personal Information

Many times students initiate discussion on personal issues or give small indications that they would like to discuss something but are waiting for support or the right opportunity. This support can be provided by a leader as well as the guidance to work through the problem to some conclusion.

Some of the kinds of issues that may be discussed by students are:

Family Pain

- Crisis
- Divorce
- Therapy
- Death-grieving
- Abuse
- Incest
- Isolation--alienation
- Family scapegoating
- Family chemical problems

Chemical Use/Abuse

School

- Dropping out
- Administration/teacher conflicts
- General problem solving

Sexual issues (usually occurs in the same sex groups)

- Contraception
- Pregnancy
- Abortion
- Feelings about sexuality

SAIL staff facilitates and processes growth in the areas of personal issues in the following ways:

1. Encouraging student to bring up personal problems in group.
   - I'd like you to bring that up in group.
   - I'd like permission to ask you about that in group. Maybe other group members would have some ideas.
2. Encouraging students to get help/support/suggestions on any personal problems from group by saying such questions as:
   - Let's brainstorm some ideas for Sally.
   - How have you felt or acted in similar situations?
   - What suggestions can people give Bill for getting to school on time?

3. Facilitating students sharing about themselves.

   - What was your best birthday—worst birthday?
   - How are you like or unlike mother/father? What attributes would you like to have and develop? How do you want to be different?
   - Sharing baby pictures and/or family album.
   - Sharing family trees, being aware of students who have unusual or difficult family situations.
   - Share something about yourselves that group members don't know.
   - What's it like to be doing better now? What have you had to give up or gotten for yourself? How are people treating you different? What do you like? What don't you like?

4. Helping students to interpret and integrate feelings and behavior.

   - How did you feel when your teacher said that?
   - How does your body feel when you're in that situation?
   - How do you feel about yourself when you cut classes?
   - Can you be proud of yourself for meeting your goals this week?
   - I bet you feel lonely when all that is going on in your family.
   - What were your feeling and how did you act when you got caught smoking?

5. Discussing Value Statement: Value Clarification

   - You can't do or say anything that warrants being hit.
   - I think people are at a huge disadvantage for life if they don't have a high school diploma.

6. Structuring exercises to help students discover their value systems.

   - What would you really like to do? What do your parents want you to do? (In relation to careers)
   - Who should do certain jobs in the home? Who should pay on a date? (In relation to expectations for females/males)
   - What would you tell a younger brother or sister about the importance of school? Why don't you drop out?
   - What are your parents expectations for you related to education—is it different for brothers and sisters? (In relation to school)

Focusing on Relationship Issues

SAIL leaders also encourage students to talk honestly and respectfully about one another. It is essential to structure and model exercises to give positive and negative feedback in a way that is caring and doesn't put others down. Group discussions are also encouraged regarding the actual relationship between two students. Leaders facilitate this process in the following ways:

1. Asking each group member to go complete the following statements as they relate to each person in group:

   - I inhibit myself when you do or say . . .
   - I feel support when you do or say . . .

2. Asking students to tell each other group member any of these things:

   - A strength you have is . . .
   - How I used to see you that is different now . . .
   - Something about you I never knew before is . . .
   - What do you think Sue is feeling right now?

3. Structuring nurturing exercises.

   - Doing a strength bombardment on each group member or for one whom it is particularily appropriate.

   - Giving imaginary gifts to each other possibly at Holiday time or imaginary birthday gifts to one person.

4. Facilitating and modeling caring confrontation of members.

   - Confronting absent group member–"How come you weren't here last Friday? We missed you!"

   - Encouraging group members to ask each other what is going on if student is not meeting goals–"What is going on?" "How come you didn't tell us you weren't going to class?" "Can we walk there together?" "Can I help you get that paper done?"

5. Asking questions like:

   - How does it make you feel when Jay doesn't come to group or shows up late?

   - Are people concerned about confidentiality in this group?

   - What do people do that make you feel they aren't listening?

   - When Bill does that, how does that make you feel?

6. Encouraging friends to work through relationship problems with help of group.

   - Susie, it sounds like you are talking for Barb–do you often do that?

   - It's really obvious today that you, John and you, Bob are not talking to each other–it really changes the group--what's going on?

7. Encouraging group members to bring up concerns about group (shared in individual counseling).

   - I think you need to let Sally know how you feel.

   - Would you be willing to share your concerns about confidentiality with the group today?

TERMINATION ACTIVITIES

When a group terminates the members go through a process similar to grieving any ending. Students have a variety of feelings (anger, sadness, fear) that need to be expressed as well as the need to test out old behaviors and plan for the future. Students can be taught and helped to go through this process in a healthy way. Hopefully, this process is transferable to other areas of their lives. Group leaders need to be aware that students exhibit termination behaviors at many different times of the year—not just when group ends permanently. These other times are noticed before vacations, the end of the quarter, going to treatment/hospital, moving, dropping out, and even before weekends or at the end of a particularly meaningful group session. In addition to facilitating progress from one level of termination to another, group leaders also need to allow students to experience the feelings they have at that moment. For example, if a student is experiencing the level which is expressed by anger, it was important for the leader to acknowledge and support those feelings as well as to try to help the student move onto the next level. All of the following strategies are used by SAIL group leaders during termination and seem generally appropriate to termination rather than any one stage of that process. SAIL group leaders find that they need to be aware that they too are going through some feelings of termination which have impact on group dynamics. But most important, a terminating group, with each member at a different stage of termination, can often be very distressing, chaotic, angry and certainly far from the "intimate" group it once was. The ability to recognize this will allow the leaders to keep a perspective and therefore be more available to facilitate students with this process. The three basic tasks that need to occur at this stage are: expressing feelings, testing previous behaviors, and facing ending.

Expressing Feelings

When a group is going through termination or ending, students have many different feelings such as anger, sadness, excitement, denial and fear. It is important that leaders facilitate the awareness and discussion of these feelings.

1. Reminiscing about what it was like "back then."

    - Discussing history of the group—who has come and gone—how that has felt.
    - How people have changed.
    - What I will always remember.
    - My favorite group.
    - What I thought the first day.
    - Talking about uniqueness of group—never have a group just like this one.

- Talking about other endings--"How have they felt? How do you usually say good-bye? How have they been good/bad? What are other options?"
- How crazy, bad, dumb, irresponsible I was back then.
- What I learned from you is . . .

2. Identifying and interpreting feelings.

- Sometimes its hard to say good-bye and feels easier to leave angry.
- You don't have to fail SAIL now. You can still come back to see me even if you graduate.
- I know you're feeling angry right now but I'd like you to come to group because they would like to know what is going on with you--that you're wanting to drop.
- I'm feeling sad that you are leaving--are you?
- What is your worst fear of what might happen over Christmas vacation? Could you handle that? How?
- Feel bad that I didn't use this group to get me to go to class. I would do it different next time.

Testing Previous Behaviors

During this stage of ending students often regress to old behaviors for many different reasons. Students wonder if they have really changed, if you'll still like them the "old way" or if they would rather be the "way they were." This can be a very distressing time for the leader if this process is not understood. It is important that a leader have a way to help students with this frightening stage.

1. Assuring students.

- I hope you don't fail English, but if you do, I'll still be here to help you.
- There is nothing you can do now to make me give up on you.
- It's OK for you not to be perfect all of the time. But you know what you can do when you decide.

2. Keeping structure clear.

   - It is important to me that we take advantage of each of our last individual counseling sessions.
   - Since we have only a few sessions we want to make sure we all continue to be on time and use our time well.
   - Mary, if you miss one more day, you will not get SAIL credit. Don't let that keep you from graduating.

Facing Ending

At this stage the end often needs to be made explicit and acted upon before a student or group can effectively talk about the future. Planning for the future too soon can also be a way of denying ending or resisting saying "good-bye." The tasks of this stage are to accept the end and look forward to what is ahead.

1. Making ending explicit.

   - We have six groups left, how do we want to spend them? (Use calendar)
   - Announcing that this is the "last birthday" or "last breakfast together."
   - It won't ever be the same again.
   - Plan special ending celebration picnic, out-to-eat, etc.
   - Announce that this is the last 6 weeks in high school for some kids--how do they want to spend time in group.
   - Taking pictures of students in cap and gowns.

2. Discussing ending options.

   - How is year going to end with family, friends, and school.
   - Discussing if "group is going to continue next --can we meet in the summer?"
   - How can we keep contact with each other?
   - What wouldyou like to be able to continue from group--how can we get that for ourselves?

- Exchanging phone numbers--addresses

3. Ritualizing ending.

   - Helping with program evaluation--questionnaires, testing, etc.
   - Giving group members something to leave with such as a picture, personal poster, or collage with contributions from each group member.
   - Giving imaginary going away gifts or predictions for the future.
   - Writing letters to be delivered to each group member six months later.

4. Planning for the future.

   - Talking about summer or next fall.
   - Helping student with looking into colleges/vocational schools, etc.
   - How does one get a summer job?
   - Having students talk about where they might get support after group is over.

SUMMARY

This chapter describes strategies and activities that have been used by SAIL staff to facilitate the various stages of group development. These strategies have been divided into the following categories:

Trust Building
    Information sharing

Cohesion
    Forming sense of group
    Building common goals

Power
    Testing structure
    Asserting group power
    Establishing individual autonomy

Intimacy
- Sharing personal issues
- Confronting relationship issues

Termination
- Expressing feelings
- Testing previous behaviors
- Facing ending

Allowing adaption and creativity in each of these areas helps to insure group experiences that are appropriate and reflect the personality, tone and development of the group.

These strategies and activities are representative of many more ideas that may be appropriate for a particular school program and its students at any given time. It is important that these exercises not be used like recipes. In fact too much emphasis on specific content and not enough on process can be counter productive. It is crucial that leaders:

- Be sensitive to the elements of successful group functioning in that particular school setting.
- Know the stage of development of their group.
- Consider what happened in the previous group sessions.
- Be sensitive to the current individual needs of the students.
- Let the content reflect the personality and tone of the particular group.
- Give themselves permission to plan activities around their own interests, skills and leadership style.
- Make time to debrief and plan group before and after each group.
- Allow themselves to change all plans at any given time to fit the changing needs of the students, school or the group leaders.
- Allow themselves to sometimes have a boring/ out of control/terrible group.

CHAPTER FIVE: LEARNING THE HARD WAY

This chapter contains three sections each of which are based on situations SAIL staff have actually experienced.

A) How to Destroy a Group

B) The Most Terrifying and/or Demoralizing Things That Happen to Group Leaders

C) How to Insure Group Leader Burnout

HOW TO DESTROY A GROUP

1. Put eight passive kids and one non-stop talker together in a group.
2. Have two women lead an all male group.
3. Continuously add new kids to a group.
4. Bring a kid into group whom everybody else in the group hates.
5. Let a new student enter your group before you've even begun forming a relationship with that student.
6. Allow a student who is paranoid or delusional to become the informal group leader.
7. Talk with group members about one another outside of group.
8. Do fantasy activities with a kid who's not in touch with reality.
9. Try to carry over a topic for more than two group sessions.
10. Bending rules too far--eg. let the kids decide when to start and end group.
11. Allow kids to remain in group who continually break the group's confidentiality rule.

12. Go into group by "the seat of your pants" with no structured plan for activities. Ask students open-ended questions and promote long silences. "What do you want to get out of being in SAIL?" "What do you want to talk about in group today?"

13. Have one group leader that comes in and out, answering phone calls or talking with other students during the group time.

14. Report confidential material shared in group to the police.

15. Allow visitors into group.

16. Hold group in a public area with no privacy.

17. Have two group leaders work together who have a major personality conflict.

TERRIFYING AND/OR DEMORALIZING EXPERIENCES FOR GROUP LEADERS

1. Student begins building a gun in group.

2. First time a kid storms out of group.

3. Being genuinely afraid of physical assault if you confront a student.

4. Getting a birthday cake with candles that won't blow out—you keep blowing and the classroom just fills with smoke.

5. A group member says she/he is going to have a nervous breakdown if you keep pushing.

6. A student's ending comment is, "Thanks to group I'm going to get high," or I'm going to cut class."

7. You're alone doing a group and kids say group is boring because your co-leader is not there.

8. Kids say, "This group always makes me feel worse."

9. The group has planned a field trip to go out to a restaurant for breakfast and all eight kids announce that they didn't bring money.

10. Kids getting "high" on a field trip.

11. Anytime group is out of control.

12. When you've been allowed to use the administrative conference room and after group find obscene graffiti on the armchairs.

13. When someone shares something very personal and the other group members don't respond or act bored.

14. When you do a fantasy exercise and one of the group members stays in fantasyland.

15. When a student expresses violent intentions.

16. Every kid says, "I hate this group," or "Group sucks."

HOW TO INSURE GROUPLEADER BURNOUT

1. Give every kid and parent your home telephone number.

2. Take responsibility whenever kid does well, then you can also assume the blame when they fail.

3. Feel guilty for not "saving" the student.

4. Lead groups alone.

5. Try to solve the total family problems as well.

6. Look for your own sense of well being from the students.

7. Keep working a little harder until someone says "thanks."

8. Try to be a best friend to students.

9. Always need to be liked.

10. Help students by doing things for them that they could do themselves.

11. Work during lunch breaks.

12. Don't allow time to "debrief" group sessions with your co-leader.

13. When students say group is "boring" assume they are right--that you have to do something about it.

14. Agree to lead a group during your preparation hour.

15. Lead more than two groups per day.

16. Tell yourself there is really a "right way" and if you were smarter and/or worked harder kids would get well faster.

17. Work with students all day, run parent groups at night.

18. Avoid asking for feedback and support from colleagues.